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// C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- MARKINGS PARA SEVEN //

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/C

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TAGS: [MCAP](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [MONUC](#) [CG](#) [RW](#)

SUBJECT: ANALYST BRIEFS WORLD BANK PROGRAM ON FDLR

¶1. (SBU) Summary. On 6 October World Bank consultant Hans Romkema briefed diplomats and Bank employees on the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). He described the FDLR, estimated at 8,000) 10,000, as deeply entrenched in North and South Kivu. Romkema described FDLR leadership as organized and active in dictating local economic and political conditions and said they continue to be committed to the "Hutu Power" philosophy, but are realistic about the low chances of seeing their political objectives successful in Rwanda. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Romkema, a Dutch citizen, has worked in the region since 1996. He is currently an employee of Netherlands-based Conflict and Transition Consultancies, contracted by the World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) to study Armed Groups (AG) in the eastern DRC. Romkema's study is due to be completed in early December, as

such, he did not want to release a draft but he was willing to brief some of his preliminary findings to the attendees of the MDRP Joint Partner Implementation Support Mission held in Kigali 4-6 October. A summary of the MDRP's Partner's Mission will be reported septel.

¶3. (SBU) Romkema's research included extensive time in the Kivus meeting with GDRC and MONUC officials, regular citizens and members of the FDLR. He reported that the FDLR effectively controls over 50 of North and South Kivu, mainly in areas with a relatively low population and no DRC Armed Forces (FARDC) presence. Income generating activities include agriculture, mining, trade, looting and tax collection. Romkema noted that, unlike the Congolese who often focus exclusively on mining or other mineral exploitation, the Rwandans usually maintain their agricultural activities in addition to exploiting mineral resources, thus, they are generally better off economically than the local Congolese.

¶4. (SBU) According to Romkema, the situation is generally

stable for the FDLR in the Kivus, the only change coming when FARDC or MONUC mount offensive operations (which has been not been a regular occurrence). FDLR members maintain regularity

in their daily activities, the command structure is in tact and discipline is maintained. For example, troops must file leave requests and receive authorization to leave the immediate area. Minor actions continue, such as setting up road blocks to control an area and collect taxes, however, no large scale offensive operations are currently planned.

¶5. (SBU) While daily life is generally a settled routine, there is uncertainty about the future. Romkema reported that the majority of the combatants recognize that the FDLR's political objectives will not be achieved and lines of command and communication are gradually weakening, especially in South Kivu. However, there is still recruitment and training- probably enough to counter the losses of ex-combatants who return to Rwanda. Current recruitment efforts include women and children who are then trained in defensive militia tactics. Trainers have used "Hutu power" rhetoric including "we are still Interahamwe" and "there is

still a job to do" but the majority of the FDLR troops and dependants do not agree with this attitude- a potential problem for the hard-liners. (Note. MONUC reports about 500 FDLR officers, most of whom are ex-FAR or Interahamwe, who must maintain control of the majority. As these hard-liners would be tried as genocidaires in Rwanda, they have no motivation to deviate from the political agenda and will likely continue to exert maximum influence on the younger members. End note.)

¶6. (SBU) Romkema confirmed earlier reports that reports that the FDLR provided assistance to the presidential election including manpower and logistical support (transportation) and may have campaigned/threatened on behalf of Kabila.

¶7. (SBU) Comment. Romkema plans to continue his research and will write a thorough report detailing his findings by year's end- post will continue to monitor his progress. His preliminary findings are consistent with Embassy's assessment of the FDLR, that is, a well organized force of 8-10 thousand combatants posing a minimal military threat to Rwanda but

continuing to operate independently and unlawfully in eastern Congo, thus, destabilizing the region. High level GOR officials, including President Kagame, have recently acknowledged that the FDLR is no longer the threat to the Rwandan government it once was, however, as long as it exists it will continue to be the primary focus of the Rwandan Defense Forces and a key issue in the normalization of relations between Rwanda and DRC. End comment.

THURSTON